FELLOW NEWS

NEWS FOR AND ABOUT THE COASTAL MANAGEMENT FELLOWS

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THIS NEWSLETTER IS PUBLISHED BY THE NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION (NOAA) COASTAL SERVICES CENTER TO RELAY INFORMATION ABOUT THE FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM AND PROVIDE A FORUM FOR INFORMATION EXCHANGE AMONG FELLOWS, MENTORS, SEA GRANT, AND THE CENTER.

FELLOW FLASHBACK: CHRIS RILLING 1996–1998

"Go with the opportunities you are presented with," advises former fellow, Chris Rilling. Although the recommendation is offered to current and future fellows, it is certainly advice that Chris himself has followed. A member of the inaugural class of Coastal Management Fellows in 1996, Chris was also a commercial fisherman in Alaska for seven years and lived on a sailboat in the Chesapeake Bay for two years. Chris is currently a coastal management specialist for NOAA in the Coastal Programs Division of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management (OCRM) in Silver Springs, Maryland.

During his fellowship with the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection's Office of Long Island Sound Programs Chris worked with Connecticut College investigators to conduct research on tidal wetlands of the lower Connecticut River. In an effort to identify effective restoration strategies, Chris examined the impact of the invasive species *Phragmites australis* (the common reed) by comparing areas affected by the invasive grass with restored marshes. He also investigated the use of herbicides to control the common reed as one possible restoration technique. In addition, Chris developed a database that tracked restoration projects, as well as sites for potential restoration, along the shores of the Long Island Sound.

After the completion of his fellowship, Chris remained with the Connecticut program for another year working on tidal wetlands restorations before moving on to the NOAA OCRM position.

In his current capacity, Chris manages grants issued by Congress to state coastal management programs in the Southern and Caribbean region. He has had some opportunities for fieldwork, recently participating in the development of the Coastal Hazards Information System (COHIS). This joint federal-state project involved traveling to Georgia and Alabama and inventorying all shoreline structures that fall within coastal management jurisdiction that were at a high risk to damage from hurricanes. COHIS is modeled after the work of another Coastal Management Fellow, Doug Marcy (1997-1999), who developed a similar product for the coastal regions of South Carolina during his fellowship.

Chris and other team members walked the shores of Georgia and Alabama collecting Global Positioning System (GPS) points and digital photos of each structure. This information, along with parcel and ownership information, was added to a geographic information system (GIS) package that was designed to help states with response and immediate damage assessment following a hurricane disaster. A set of CD-ROMs is currently available for the completed Georgia project, and a set for the Alabama project should be available later this fall. These products will also serve as a model for other coastal states.

Chris (above right), wearing a Trimble GPS backpack that was used to collect GPS points of all shoreline structures in Georgia, talks with visitors to the Tybee Island Pier, Tybee Island, GA, about the COHIS survey.

Chris credits the fellowship program with helping to develop his technical abilities, including learning to use ArcView®, and helping to focus his career interests. He also gained

Continued on page 2

valuable experience working at the state level and learning about the day-to-day problems and issues. Chris highly recommends participation in the fellowship program for anyone looking for the perfect opportunity to get on-the-job coastal management experience at the state level.♦

For more information on COHIS, contact Chris at Chris.Rilling@noaa.gov. To view the tutorial portion of the Post Hurricane Recovery Element *CD-ROM by Doug Marcy, visit www.csc.noaa.gov/cms/fellow_tutorial/ocrmpost.htm.*

FOCUS ON FELLOWS: BECKY ELLIN 2000–2002

Growing up in a military family allowed Becky Ellin the opportunity to live in a variety of coastal communities. Spending several of her early years in California and Guam, she was regularly exposed to the marine environment through snorkeling and visiting the beach. After completing high school in Virginia Beach, she knew she wanted to study marine biology.

Becky received her undergraduate degree from the College of Charleston and then worked for two years with South Carolina's Department of Natural Resources before enrolling in the marine science graduate program at the University of South Carolina. Near the end of her program, Becky received an e-mail from a professor about the Coastal Management Fellowship Program. She was immediately interested. Having strictly a science background, Becky wanted to see how scientific research and information could be applied in a management setting. She viewed

Becky Ellin, 2000 Coastal Management Fellow, is currently with the California Coastal Commission.

the program as a perfect opportunity to bridge the gap between two discrete fields – science and management.

Nominated by South Carolina Sea Grant, Becky was placed with the California Coastal Commission to work on a project entitled "Creation of a Habitat Inventory and Information System to Facilitate Wetland Preservation and Restoration in Central and Northern California." Her project encompasses two primary components: identifying significant wetlands in four counties of northern and central California and developing a Microsoft® Access® database and GIS to house descriptive and spatial wetland information, which will, when complete, be available on the Internet.

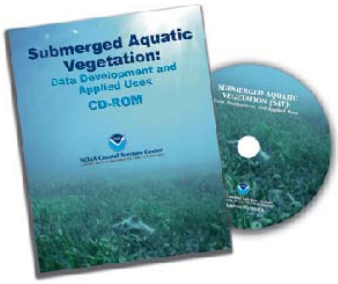
The project, modeled after the Southern California Wetlands Inventory and the Southern California Wetlands Recovery Project Information System, will function as a planning tool to aid in the preservation of existing wetlands and restoration of historical wetlands. Becky began her project by making an inventory of wetlands using existing data from the National Wetland Inventory, local documents, and aerial photography. She recently completed a needs assessment to identify the GIS layers that will be required, and she is now in the process of determining which wetlands to include in the database based on their size and function. Becky says she is on target to complete the project by the end of the fellowship.

Although she really enjoys the San Francisco Bay area, Becky's future plans are flexible. She believes that the fellowship program is a great experience that has opened up a whole new world to her and has allowed her to learn many things that would have been unavailable to her in a regular job. She would like to explore more management issues, but still has a great interest in science. Ideally, after the fellowship, Becky would like to find a position where she can draw from her science background and apply it to management issues.♦

For more information, e-mail Becky at rellin@coastal.ca.gov.
To learn more about the Southern California Wetlands Inventory, please visit http://ceres.ca.gov/wetlands/geo_info/so_cal.html. For more information about the Southern California Wetlands Recovery Project Information System, visit www.regis.berkeley.edu/Coastalconserv/web2/index.html.

NOAA Coastal Services Center
LINKING PEOPLE, INFORMATION, AND TECHNOLOGY

Focus on the Center: *Submerged Aquatic Vegetation*



Seagrasses, and other types of submerged aquatic vegetation (SAV), can be found in the coastal waters of the United States. They are a vital element of many coastal ecosystems and help to support the overall health of a coastal environment in a variety of ways. Because of their significance to coastal environments, many state and federal laws have been created to protect these underwater plants. The problem for many coastal managers is the difficulty of protecting what they can't see.

Submerged Aquatic Vegetation: Data Development and Applied Uses, a CD-ROM produced by the Center, was created to provide managers and data developers the information, mapping techniques, and data applications needed to create or enhance SAV mapping programs.

Applied Uses

This CD-ROM includes several examples of how SAV data has been used by coastal managers and other environmental agencies.

Dredge Material Siting – For its $400 million harbor revitalization project, the Massachusetts Coastal Program used SAV maps to create an environmentally sound disposal plan.

Documenting Shellfish Harvesting Impacts – SAV mapping by the Virginia Institute of Marine Science documented the destructive effects of hydraulic clam dredges. As a result, Virginia and Maryland banned this type of dredging in SAV beds.

Water Quality Indicators – The St. Johns River Water Management District along the east coast of Florida uses SAV maps to help determine if efforts to maintain and improve water quality are effective.

Ferry Terminal Expansion – Eelgrass maps in the Puget Sound, produced by the Battelle Marine Science Laboratory and the University of Washington, are helping officials balance environmental concerns while meeting the need to expand docking terminals.

Benthic Habitat Mapping Guidance

This CD-ROM also includes technical guidance and standardized methodologies for the mapping of benthic habitats. Highlighted is the Center's Benthic Habitat Mapping project, available on the Web at *www.csc.noaa.gov/crs/bhm/*.

Management Tools

This informative resource also offers

- Information about funding sources
- Legislation related to SAV
- Reference materials
- Tips for working with mapping contractors

To order *Submerged Aquatic Vegetation: Data Development and Applied Uses*, contact the NOAA Coastal Services Center at *www.csc.noaa.gov/clearinghouse*.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR …

Upcoming Deadlines for the 2002 NOAA Coastal Management Fellowship

➢ Final Project Selection	November 13, 2001
➢ Fellow Candidate Applications to Sea Grant Directors	February 1, 2002
➢ Nomination Packages due from Sea Grant	March 1, 2002
➢ Project/Fellow Matching Workshop	April 15–19, 2002 (in Charleston, SC)
➢ Fellow Trip to Matched State Program	TBD between Fellow and State
➢ Project/Fellow Start Date	August 1, 2002

*** Upcoming Events *** Upcoming Events *** Upcoming Events ***

OCTOBER

1–4: 11th International Conference on Aquatic Invasive Species
Location: Alexandria, Virginia
www.aquatic-invasive-species-conference.org/

15: Abstracts due for presentations for The Coastal Society
www.thecoastal.society.org/tcs18/

23–25: NOAA Tech 2002
Location: Silver Spring, Maryland
www.noaatech2002.noaa.gov/

NOVEMBER

4–8: 16th Biennial Conference of the Estuarine Research Federation*
Location: St Pete Beach, Florida
www.erf.org/erf2001/

5–7: 7th International Conference on Estuarine and Coastal Modeling*
Location: St Pete Beach, Florida
www.oce.uri.edu/ecm7/

6–9: Fourth Conference on Coastal Atmospheric and Oceanographic Prediction and Processes*
Location: St Petersburg, Florida
www.ametsoc.org/AMS/meet/FAINST/4coastal_hp.html

***Several sessions will be coordinated between all three conferences.**

DECEMBER

6–7: 2nd National Conference on Science, Policy and the Environment – Sustainable Communites: Science and Solutions
Location: Washington, D.C.
http://cnie.org/NCSEconference/2001conference/